



# Werneth School Young Carers Policy



Werneth School is committed to enabling young carers to access education and support. This policy aims to ensure young carers at this school are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education and other services to which they are entitled.

## Definition

Young carers are children and young people who provide care to another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development. This is likely to have a significant impact on their childhood experiences.

The person they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problem
- Chronic illness
- Substance misuse problem

## Caring Tasks

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. A young carer might be providing the main care or share responsibilities with another family member. The caring tasks that a young carer has to deal with can range from:

**Nursing care:** giving medication, injections, changing dressings, assisting with mobility etc.

**Personal intimate care:** washing, dressing, feeding and helping with toilet requirements.

**Emotional care:** being compliant, monitoring the emotional state of the person cared for, listening, being a shoulder to cry on, supporting a parent through depression and trying to cheer them up. In cases where a young carer is supporting an adult with drug/alcohol misuse problem, they will often take a leading role in trying to keep that person safe.

**Domestic care:** doing a substantial amount of housework, cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry etc.

**Financial care:** running the household, bill paying, benefit collection etc.

**Child care:** taking responsibility for younger siblings in addition to their other caring responsibilities.

**Communication & Interpreting:** communicating on behalf of the adult or family with agencies/services and interpreting for a language or sensory impairment.

### **Possible effect on education**

**Werneth School** acknowledges that there are likely to be young carers among its students, and that being a young carer can have an adverse effect on a young person's access to education and attainment.

Because of their responsibilities at home, a young carer might:

- Have erratic or poor school attendance
- Arrive late at school
- Decline in academic achievement
- Not complete homework
- Not attend out of school activities or school trips
- Lack motivation
- Have back problems, aches and pains patterns of being generally unwell
- Appear withdrawn, isolated from peers, have difficulties socialising
- Show, anxiety, depression, anger, self-harming behaviour
- Have poor concentration (due to worrying about the person who is cared for)
- Have poor home/ school relationship
- Have parents who do not attend parents evening or lack of overall contact with school
- Have false signs of maturity, assuming an adult role in social situations or have difficulty enjoying childhood activities

It also might be difficult to engage their parents (due to fears about child being taken into care, fears about their condition being misunderstood or their parenting skills being called into question). School may need to make alternative arrangements for communication about attainment.

### **Support Offered**

**Werneth School** acknowledges that Young Carers may need extra support to ensure they have equal access to education and opportunities offered through the life of a school. This policy has been updated in Dec 2018 to take account of feedback from Young Carers where they requested:

- Wider access to support within the school,
- Assurance that the information about Young Carers is reviewed and updated quarterly and that teachers are advised accordingly,
- That they have access to a specific area they can access on a regular basis
- That we look to offer lunchtime detentions rather than after school

Through this policy, school is giving the message that Young Carers education and school experience is important.

To address the feedback from Young Carers:

- Werneth school has nominated three staff who will be able to support Young Carers on a daily basis, to provide support/advice etc as required. This will be in addition to the nominated lead for Young Carers
- Updated all information held on the school databases and advised all staff accordingly
- Started a series of “Chippy Tuesday” and “Fruity Friday” events that will provide Young Carers with the opportunity to meet, talk and relax together as a group. In addition, Young Carers can access the HART space before school starts, during breaks/lunch time and for after school homework club.

The designated school lead for Young Carers is

- **Miss Dee** (Senior Deputy Headteacher), with support from
- **Mrs Craven, Mrs Miller and Mr McAllister**, in HART (as the day to day organisational leads for Young Carers). They will liaise with relevant colleagues such as Signpost, (Stockport Young Carers Charity) and other relevant agencies as appropriate, with the consent of the young carer.

The school governor lead is **Mr McAllister**, who will ensure that the issue of Young Carers is regularly reviewed by the schools governing board.

Werneth School will ensure that appropriate information is shared with school staff in order that there is an awareness of the young carer’s situation.

#### **Additionally:**

- We will provide young carers with opportunities to speak to someone in private, and will not discuss their situation in front of their peers.
- We appreciate that young carers will not discuss their family situation unless they feel comfortable. The young person’s caring role will be acknowledged and respected.
- We will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way, upholding confidentiality.
- We will ensure young carers can access all available support services in school and other appropriate services/agencies.
- We will follow safeguarding procedures regarding any young carer at risk of significant harm due to inappropriate levels of caring.
- We will promote discussion and learning in all areas of the curriculum to facilitate fuller understanding, acceptance of and respect for, the issues surrounding illness, disability and caring.
- We recognise that flexibility may be needed when responding to the needs of young carers.

Available provision includes (but is not limited to):

- Access to a telephone during breaks and lunchtime, to phone home
- Negotiable deadlines for homework/coursework (when needed)
- Access to homework clubs (where these are available)
- Lunchtime detentions rather than after school detentions (where possible)
- Arrangements for schoolwork to be sent home (where there is a genuine crisis).
- Any approved absence for a young carer will be time limited (DfES 2006)

- Access for parents with impaired mobility
- Alternative communication options for parents who are sensory impaired or housebound
- Advice to parents if there are difficulties in transporting a young carer to school

We also recognise the need to ensure key information is passed onto relevant colleges when our Young Carers prepare to leave Werneth School in Year 11. We have therefore agreed with Signpost Young Carers Service that we work in partnership with them to pass on key information (with the student's consent) that will ensure the Young Carers responsibilities are fully understood by the relevant college. We will use the YC5 to provide the initial information and then set up further telekit's/meetings as required (personalised to the needs of each student)

**List of Forms:**

- YC 1 Young Carers Action Plan
- YC2 Initial Observation Checklist
- YC3 Wellbeing Questionnaire
- YC4 Governor's Review and Sign-off
- YC5 Onward Referral to College

For further information please contact Jo Dee, [Jo.dee@wernethschool.com](mailto:Jo.dee@wernethschool.com)  
 or  
 Stockport Young Carers on Tel: 0161 947 4690 [signpostforcarers.org.uk](http://signpostforcarers.org.uk),

**Why do we need a school lead for Young Carers?**

Background to the role

A young carer is a child or young person who provides care for another family member. The level of care they provide would usually be undertaken by an adult and as a result of this they take on a level of responsibility that is inappropriate to their age and development.

The person or persons that they look after will have one or more of the following:

- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Learning disability
- Mental health problems
- Chronic illness
- Drug or alcohol misuse problems

**They may also be taking on a caring role if they are:**

- growing up with disabled siblings,
- in a family where there has been recent serious or terminal illness diagnosed,
- coping with illness in wider family.

Key findings from 'Hidden from view' report from the Children's Society, 2013.

1. Latest census statistics 2013 reveal there are 166,363 young carers in England, compared to around 139,000 in 2001. This is likely to be an underrepresentation of the true picture as many remain under the radar of professionals.
2. One in 12 young carers is caring for more than 15 hours per week. Around one in 20 misses school because of their caring responsibilities.
3. Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to be from black, Asian or minority

- ethnic communities, and are twice as likely to not speak English as their first language.
4. Young carers are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to have a special educational need or a disability.
  5. The average annual income for families with a young carer is £5000 less than families who do not have a young carer.
  6. There is no strong evidence that young carers are more likely than their peers to come into contact with support agencies, despite government recognition that this needs to happen.
  7. Young carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's.
  8. Young carers are more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19.

Around 21% of young carers identified in Stockport miss school because of their caring responsibilities. Many will be late to school and unable to complete their homework on time. When at school young carers may have difficulty concentrating due to anxiety about the person they care for. In addition to academic problems, many young carers have difficulty integrating socially within the school environment, with some being teased or bullied by their peers. In spite of these problems the majority of young carers will not be identified as such by staff in schools, partly because young carers and their families often remain silent about their caring responsibilities due to fears of the reactions of statutory agencies and peers and the stigma surrounding some health conditions, addictions and disabilities or they are unaware that help may be available.

Principle 4 from the *Key Principles of Practice* (The Children's Society 2008) recommends that:

*“Schools and colleges take responsibility to identify young carers at an early stage and have a named staff member with lead responsibility for young carers to ensure that they have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers; and to be responsible for promoting and co-ordinating the support they need in school and liaising with other agencies as appropriate.”*

Stockport CYPD Scrutiny Committee Review (February 2010) recommends that schools identify a school lead with responsibility to monitor young carer provision and support

## Role Description - School Lead for Young Carers

This is senior role and is an integral part of the responsibilities shared by leadership team in the school. The School Lead for Young Carers role is to oversee the policy and provision for young carers in the school. The person undertaking the role should have sufficient influence in the school to advocate for young carers and their families.

This description is presented as a role rather than a job description as a leadership team could share these tasks to manage identification, provision and support for young carers and their families.

However, whether the role is shared or not, one person should hold the title, take the lead and network with other agencies so that the school benefits fully from local and national support and guidance available.

### Key tasks and responsibilities

- As a member of the school leadership team, ensure appropriate strategies, policies and procedures are in place to proactively identify young carers, ensuring that their needs are recognised and met.
- To ensure that those young people who have caring responsibilities are supported effectively and enabled to meet Every Child Matters outcomes and that they have the same access to educational and career choices as their peers.
- To lead on establishing staff induction, training and information to enable staff to:
  - recognise the signs that a child or young person has caring responsibilities
  - increase their understanding of the impact of such responsibilities,
  - ensuring that they are aware of the identified school lead with responsibility for young carers, and
  - help young carers and their families understand how this support can be accessed
- To ensure that the curriculum promotes a full understanding and acceptance of, and respect for, the issues and needs of young carers and their families, promoting positive images and challenging stereotypes around disability and impairment.
- Monitor relevance of existing school policies e.g. attendance, anti bullying, procedures and practice on the wellbeing and specific needs of young carers. Report strengths, weaknesses and recommendations to school leadership team and governors for inclusion in school development plan.
- Use and evaluate existing data effectively to monitor the welfare and progress made by young carers. Highlight barriers to achievement such as poor attendance and punctuality, failure to complete homework, non-engagement with extended school or extra-curricular activities and work with appropriate colleagues to remove / reduce these barriers enabling young carer to achieve their full potential.
- To establish a first point of contact for young carers and their families within the school, encouraging young carers and their families to self-identify and to discuss any barriers they face and additional help they may need. The designated lead may choose to have Key Contacts in each year group or key stage in larger schools.
- Ensure that young carers and their families receive coordinated support by communicating effectively and working in partnership with internal and external support agencies using Common Assessment Framework.

## **Identifying a Young Carer in school**

Signs which may indicate that a child is caring for someone at home may include:

- Arriving late at school
- Missing days at school
- Tiredness
- Hunger
- Clothing or appearance may not be clean or tidy
- Underachievement
- Unable to complete home work on time
- Withdrawn, over sensitive, low self esteem
- Behavioural problems
- Difficulties with peer group, limited social skills
- Isolation, embarrassed to take friends home
- Not attending after school activities or activities in local area
- Non attendance on school trips, particularly residential
- Being bullied
- Financial difficulties
- Physical problems, such as back pain from lifting
- False signs of maturity, from assuming adult roles